

I GENERAL INFORMATION For Community Organizations

Community organizations are in a unique position to respond to a flu pandemic

- ♦ Community organizations such as churches or synagogues have access to large numbers and diverse groups of people.
- ♦ Many organizations are already experienced in disaster relief.
- ♦ Many organizations have the personnel and expertise to help populations with special needs such as immigrants and people with disabilities.
- ♦ Many organizations are already responding to the needs of vulnerable populations and are prepared to continue services during emergency situations.
- ♦ Many community organizations are trusted and respected within the local community and are well recognized sources for relief during an emergency.

What may be expected to happen during a flu pandemic?

Impact on Health and Healthcare

- ♦ The US government estimates that 30% of Americans may become ill during a flu pandemic and between 200,000 to 1.9

million people may die.

- ♦ In Washington County, 157,833 people may become ill during a flu pandemic with over 300 to over 3000 possible deaths.

- ♦ 50% of those who become ill will seek medical care. As a result, hospitals and other healthcare institutions will become overwhelmed.

Impact on Society

- ♦ Depending on the severity of the outbreak,, work absenteeism may be as high as 40% due to illness, need to take care of sick family members, or fear of infection.
- ♦ Many businesses (restaurants, banks, grocery stores, movie theaters etc.) may be closed due to workforce shortage.
- ♦ Mass transit may be running on a limited schedule or be closed down completely due to workforce shortage or for infection control.
- ♦ Schools, daycare centers and kindergartens may be closed.
- ♦ Large public gatherings may be canceled or prohibited to minimize the spread of disease.
- ♦ Quarantines and isolations may be in place to reduce the spread of disease.
- ♦ Daily essentials may be in short supply due to disruptions in transportation and normal businesses operations.

What can your organization do to prepare for a possible flu pandemic?

1. Evaluate and identify high priority services and activities and make plans to continue these activities and services with a reduced staff.
2. Identify key personnel to coordinate pandemic flu response.

3. Cross train staff and volunteers to carry out multiple organizational responsibilities in case of staff/volunteer shortage.

4. Identify ways in which staff and volunteers can work away from the central office during a pandemic (consider telephone or video conferencing instead in person meetings).

5. Establish emergency communication procedures to alert members, staff, volunteers and people within community about pandemic flu as well as to deliver accurate and timely information during a pandemic.

- Update member emergency contact information.

- For older people or people with chronic illnesses, obtain basic medical information if possible along with emergency contact info.

6. Identify vulnerable populations within your organization and the local community (people with disabilities, older people living alone, people with English as their second language, low income families etc.) and find resources and ways to help them with pandemic flu preparedness planning.

7. During a pandemic, make sure someone is available to check on older people living alone and people with disabilities.

8. Consider stockpiling emergency supplies such as water, non-perishable foods, over-the-counter medicine, radios, flashlights, batteries, first aid kits, disposable gloves and facemasks for distribution before and during a pandemic.

9. Educate staff, members, volunteers and people within the community about the importance of good hygiene in protecting people from getting sick.

10. Educate staff, members, volunteers, and people within the community about pandemic flu.

11. Encourage members, volunteers and older adults within the community to get their annual flu shots.

12. Establish infection control policies within your organization: daily disinfection of shared equipment and surfaces, sick leave policies, and wearing of personal protective equipment (gloves and face masks).

13. Change cultural norms. Encourage members, volunteers and people within the community to minimize shaking hands, kissing, hugging or sharing utensils during a pandemic.

14. Develop capabilities to prepare and deliver food to large numbers of people during a pandemic.

15. Consider designating space for community vaccination and drug dispensing during a pandemic.

Helpful websites

1. US Dept of Agriculture (USDA) Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Disaster Relief Resources website:
www.usda.gov/fbci/disaster_relief_resources_fbci.html

2. US federal government website on pandemic flu: www.pandemicflu.gov

3. World Health Organization (WHO) website on pandemic flu:
www.who.int

4.

5. USDA website on bird flu:
www.usda.gov

6. CDC – Stopping the Germ at Home,
Work and School: www.cdc.gov

Springfield/Greene County Health Department
Pandemic Health Planning
www.springfieldmogov.org
(417)830-2308